

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 647

By Yager

A RESOLUTION to urge Congress to pass the Medicare Rural Health Access Improvement Act of 2009.

WHEREAS, in 1986, the United States Congress enacted the Medicare disproportionate share (DSH) adjustment because of the belief that indigent patients are more costly to care for than middle- and upper-income patients; and

WHEREAS, the intent of these payments is to help defray the high costs hospitals incur in treating indigent patients and, in general, for treating increasing numbers of uncompensated care patients; and

WHEREAS, when DSH was enacted, separate payment formulas were established that, in effect, discriminated against rural hospitals by setting both higher thresholds for DSH eligibility, as well as lower DSH payments once eligibility was attained; and

WHEREAS, large urban facilities (greater than 100 beds) can receive unlimited add-ons that correspond with the amount of patients served, while rural and small urban (less than 100 beds) add-on payments are capped at 12% of the total amount of the inpatient payment; and

WHEREAS, eliminating temporarily the cap on Medicare DSH payments for rural and small urban hospitals and equalizing payments for all DSH hospitals will help ensure access to essential services for Tennessee communities served by their rural and small urban Tennessee hospitals; and

WHEREAS, the Medicare Rural Health Access Improvement Act of 2009 has been introduced in the U.S. Congress in order to amend Title XVIII (Medicare) of the Social Security Act to eliminate temporarily the DSH adjustment cap; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

CONCURRING, that we support the Medicare Rural Health Access Improvement Act of 2009, which would improve access to health care under the Medicare program for beneficiaries residing in rural areas.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to pass the Medicare Rural Health Access Improvement Act of 2009 to help reduce the payment disparity that discriminates against rural hospitals treating a disproportionate share of indigent Americans.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be transmitted to each member of the Tennessee Congressional delegation.